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**REGULAR MEETING**  
**April 20, 2015**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a Public Hearing on the proposed budget for 2015-2016 at the meeting of Monday, April 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Hemmann, Hurley, Kotkin, Martino, Manousos, Rell, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Barry, and Chairperson Montinieri.

Also present: Michael O'Neil, Finance Director; Michael Turner, Town Engineer; Brook Berry, Library Director; Jack Bradley, Town Attorney; Kathy Bagley, Director, Social & Youth Services; Erica Texeira, Assistant Director, Social & Youth Services; Michael Emmett, Superintendent of Schools; Sally Dastoli, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Fredrick Bushey, Jr., Director of Maintenance & Operations; Jeff Bridges, Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk.

Also present, Board of Education: Gina DeAngelo, John Cascio, Tracey McDougall, Elaine Steinmiller-Paradise, Polly Moon, Jodi Latina, John Morris, Charles Carey.

Absent: Matthew Forrest

Chairperson Montinieri opened the meeting.

Councilor Hemmann led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Presentation of abridged version of Board of Education 2015-2016 proposed budget by Superintendent Michael Emmett.



BOE Proposed  
Budget Pres to Town

Presentation of Town Manager's 2015-2016 proposed budget by Town Manager Jeff Bridges.



Town of  
Wethersfield mini - pr

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## **PUBLIC HEARING**

Carolyn Vallieres, 4 Wilcox Street spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Wethersfield Library. She thanked all the volunteers and those who donated books to help make the book sale this year a success. She advocated that the library budget be passed with no cuts; she does not want to see the library have to cut hours or any of the beneficial programs it offers.

Patricia Garach, 117 Wells Road spoke on the lack of recreational transportation for seniors in town compared to what is offered in neighboring towns. She would like to see additional funds in the dial-a-ride budget so seniors could plan occasional trips out of town at an affordable rate.

Phil Knecht, 100 Executive Square spoke about the problems he has with senior transportation to recreational activities, especially in the evening hours; transportation is either not available or expensive. Seniors want to not only go to doctor's appointments, but to get out and enjoy life.

Marjorie Carson, 12 Avalon Place, co-president of Hanmer Elementary PTO, spoke on the badly needed repairs to the school entrance and black top replacement. Black top needs a full replacement, not just repair, due to the many potholes, cracks, poor drainage and decomposing concrete which pose a safety issue. The exterior appearance also projects a bad first impression of the school; encouraged councilors to pass the board of education budget.

Nicole Hart, 13 Harmund Court, co-president of Hanmer Elementary PTO, spoke on unsafe conditions of the blacktop and asked that this repaving project be a priority on the list of repair projects at the schools. She also asked councilors to pass the board of education budget, especially the math program.

Pamela Molochko, 37 Church Street, spoke on the dangers of the Hanmer blacktop and how bad it has gotten over the past 5 years. Also supports the board of education budget and the new math program.

Kristina Cantwell, 14 Avalon Place, spoke on the blacktop safety issues at Hanmer and also to support the board of education budget and the Go Math program.

Robert Woodward, 456 Middletown Avenue, spoke on the impact of the budget increases on his retirement reserves on top of the increases in healthcare and utility payments he faces. He asked the council to consider the impact of increased taxes on people. He appreciates the Town Manager and Superintendent not taking a pay increase.

Caroline Fazzina, 19 Fairmont Street, does not like to see an increase in taxes but fully supports the board of education budget because it includes funding for the Go Math program. Her son had a very positive experience as part of the Go Math pilot program at Charles Wright. The program

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aligns with common core, allows teachers to differentiate lessons for higher and lower work, includes many more word problems to solve real-world problems, and homework pages that help students master specific skills and includes a vocabulary section.

John Adamian, 86 Waters View Drive, expressed that although he has lived here for 24 years he can no longer afford to live here due to taxes. His street has had potholes for 3 years, takes numerous calls to get them patched.

Dorene Ciarcia, 194 Garden Street, speaking as chair of the Wethersfield Library Board in support of the 2.74% budget increase (increase is for personnel services only) for the library. Wanted to make the council aware of state level cuts that will affect the Wethersfield Library:

- 1.) Proposed elimination of the Connecticard program which allows for use of 1 library card in all the libraries in the state.
- 2.) Cuts to funding of the library consortium which provides discounted service rates for things such as on-line library databases.

Amy Bello, 109 Black Birch Road with 3 children in school system, spoke in support of the school budget as well as the library and town budgets.

Daniel Silver, 23 Orchard Brook Drive, read a letter from his granddaughter, Libby Silver, who is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Webb Elementary and participates in the Go Math pilot program. She likes the program best out of all the pilot math programs because it gives clear directions, is challenging, gives quizzes every day to see if help is needed, and she is learning more.

Martha Conneely, 12 Fairmont Street, speaking as Vice Chair of the Library Board is in favor of the library budget and supports Library Director Brook Barry's vision for the library as a new town green. Library budget does include a \$15,000 proposal for re-design of the logo and technology support for updating the website. Also spoke on the threat posed to the library by the Governor's proposed budget cuts; if implemented the library would not be able to make up the losses to technology, collections and services.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, says Connecticut is not an economically friendly place and is ranked near the bottom for economic performance and outlook. Town is living beyond its means and needs to push back spending. There are a number of things in the budget that we can live without; fixed salary costs come from negotiated contracts and they always go up.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, supports the library, thinks it's the best place in town, but is unhappy about the mill rate going up 4.6%; it has been going up every year that he has lived here. He is also concerned that the amount spent on parks and recreation is twice as much as on road improvements.

Claudio Borea, 639 Highland Street, priorities have to be set pro-schools, but tough decisions have to be made. Said many people he knows talk about leaving the state of Connecticut, and the

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only place that costs more to live is San Diego. Council needs to be aware that 49% of the people in Connecticut want to leave; they can't afford to live here.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, spoke about the need to address transportation needs of the senior population; Wethersfield has the oldest average population in Connecticut and investment in them needs to be made. Also said the budget report is hard to follow; table of contents did not mention education or schools and going through the 100 page report he found almost nothing about education.

Mike Zaleski, 23 Black Birch Road spoke in favor of the Board of Education and Town budget. He wants to live in a town that supports education, libraries and recreation.

Town Clerk, Dolores Sassano read an e-mail from resident Melissa Muszynski. The e-mail included suggestions for the town for cost savings as well as suggesting the development of the Cove Park area where the DMV is located to include an area for businesses and restaurants.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road came up to speak again. He spoke about the school budget and his displeasure with the increases for contractual raises, custodial overtime, stipends, retirement, Medicare B reimbursement for teachers, and thinks these are the places to make cuts. He is unhappy with the Council supporting the MDC water program a few years ago and the increases that have gone along with it.

Patricia Garach, suggested that Wethersfield follow other towns in putting a cap on how much the budget can be increased every year. Arlington, MA has done this so that seniors do not have to be forced out of their homes by high property taxes.

John Adamian, 86 Waters View Avenue, came up to again to speak about growing up in Arlington, MA where they have twice the population, less homes on market and homes sell quickly for high prices and do not depreciate. In Wethersfield, homes sit on the market.

David Caruk, 149 Broad Street, came up again to say comparing Wethersfield to Arlington, MA is unfair comparison. Thinks part of the tax increase this year is due to paying for the high school project, which he supports and does not regret voting for.

George Ruhe sent an e-mail to the Town Clerk which was discovered after the meeting. E-mail was regarding Cloverdale Pond not being in the budget.

Town Manager Bridges announced there will be 2 Budget meetings: April 25, 2015, Saturday, at the Pitkin Community Center, 30 Greenfield St, from 8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. Department heads will present and discuss their budget; and Thursday, April 30, to complete all departments.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m., Councilor Jeffrey Kotkin moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Deputy Mayor Steven Barry. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

Approved by Vote of Council  
May 4, 2015